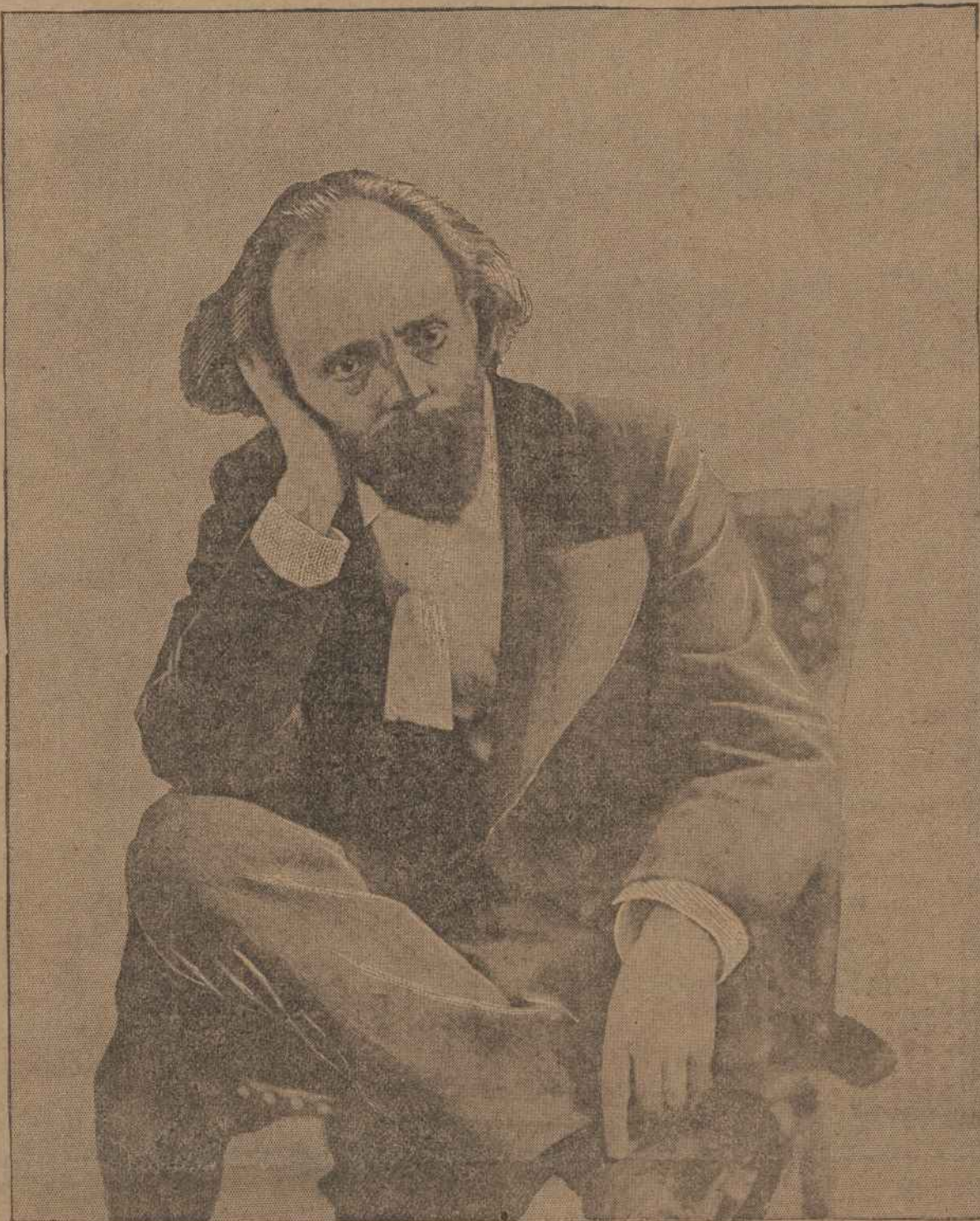


Why the World Is Growing Better and Happier.

A
Thoughtful
Analysis
of the
Progress
of
Human
Affairs
Since
the
Saviour
Came
Into
the
World
1900
Years
Ago.

BY
HALL
CAINE.



THE LATEST PHOTOGRAPH OF HALL CAINE, THE ENGLISH NOVELIST.

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AUTHOR, scholar, traveller, student of human emotions, familiar with the brilliant drawing rooms of the great capitals of Europe, and equally familiar with the darkest shadows of vice and misery of these same cities, a man of the world, and yet moved by the deepest religious convictions, Mr. Hall Caine commands attention when he speaks. He has given to the Sunday Journal a most interesting, thoughtful and appropriate Christmas monologue, explaining why the world is better and happier at the present moment than ever before. If the views and conclusions of the distinguished author of "The Christian" are somewhat optimistic they are at least founded upon wide personal experience, and an analytical study of men and things of the past.

Dictated by HALL CAINE.

THE world is growing better and happier. Taking the broadest and longest view of the material and spiritual and physical condition of man to-day there can be no doubt of this.

As to the material condition of the people, we hear a good deal about the sufferings of the masses in our days—about the miseries that result from the congested centres of population in the great cities, and of the evils that come with the progress of even so good a thing as commerce. But when we begin to look at the old civilizations, that knew but little of commerce—civilizations that were sub-centred, so to speak, in their activity—we see quite clearly that the condition of people was much poorer than anything we now know about. If you want to realize all this, just look at the present condition of those countries that have been left behind in the progress of civilization.

Take, for example, such a country as lies within our reach in the advance of civilization, let us say Morocco. There, in Northern Africa, within sight of our English fortress of Gibraltar and within reach of the Spanish port of Ceuta, in constant communication with the great countries of Europe, you have a country which has been left behind entirely in the progress of ages. There is an example of what might have existed in the time of Christ. There is a literature and art of its kind, a religion in its primitive form such as Mohammedanism was in Arabia twelve or thirteen centuries ago. And there is a sort of intellectual activity among a race that has played a great part in its own day, and has produced very splendid specimens of humanity. But what is the condition of the poor there? They are not one stage removed above absolute slavery. Their life is hardly different from barbarity.

They are the most abject servants of their masters, and their lives properly cannot at any time be called their own. They are miserably housed, shockingly fed, and their education for the most part is confined to the text of the Koran. Nor have we too much reason to believe that this is not typical of the condition of a great part of Europe even as recently as a thousand years ago. For instance, we have Caesar's Commentaries, which tell us what the condition of England was at the time the Romans landed there. I know that Caesar's Commentaries are disputed by scholars, and that they contain various little admissions which point to a situation much higher than he intends to describe. But what he says about the condition of England as a whole, making allowances for the differences of race, climate, etc., shows that the people were in a very low state indeed.

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But let us come down to more recent years. What, for example, was the condition of a great part of the people in Shakespeare's time? Look at Shakespeare's plays. Compare his pictures of the clowns, as the dwellers in the country. Would they be any fair picture of the rustic population now? It is perfectly plain that they had no rights which were much greater than the rights of dogs or horses. Even the large-hearted Shakespeare regards them with a sort of lofty pity for the most part. They are not great factors in the life of the nation. They play their parts simply as a vast machine, so to speak. I am putting this very crudely, but what is true of England is no doubt true of France, of Germany, and still more true of Russia. And the general conclusion I would form from that would be that the great mass of the people were in a much lower condition at that time than they are now.

Consider for a moment the way they were housed. Such records as we have of the homes of the poor show that they were huddled together in cities—vast populations living together without anything that we should call sanitation, which led to the great outbreaks of disease which we know as plagues. What these plagues were precisely I do not pretend to know, but those who ought to know have assured me that they were diseases that we have since exterminated by better sanitary precautions.

Consider, too, the food of the people. Notwithstanding the fact that the populations were so much smaller, and that the facilities for feeding the people off the lands of the country were therefore so much greater, it is quite obvious from the records we have that the people were miserably fed. Even the pictures of feasts and festival days sufficiently indicate in an indirect way that when the poor were fed on roast beef and drank ale they were having a tremendous feast, such as came only once in a blue moon. You may depend on it that their usual food was for the most part the very simplest, and such as the average working people nowadays would consider no sustenance.

That brings us to a physical statement. I think it very obvious that the race was a smaller one than it now is. This applies even to the fighting men of the race. In our Tower of London we have a great number of suits of armor. It may be stated that no man of the average size could get into a suit of armor of as recent a period as three hundred years ago. My impression is that I myself, who am constantly described in America as a little man, could not get into the average suit of armor that is in the

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